

dle East, but that's up to the parties involved. We'll keep working, and we'll just keep working at it.

Q. Mr. President, how do you see the chances of implementation, this current Oslo B agreement between Israel and the Palestinians? Do you perceive that this—that there are fair chances that it will be implemented correctly, positively?

The President. Yes, I believe that if the parties make a good-faith effort, I will do what I can to see that it's properly implemented and to get the necessary support from around the world.

You know, a lot of people have been cheering this process on, and those who cheer need to support it. And the United States will do what we can to support it. And I will encourage a bipartisan support within the United States and around the world. I think the parties will do their part. And those of us who support peace should do ours.

Q. Do you mean political or economically?

Q. Mr. President, do you think Israel should release all the Palestinian prisoners when the agreement is signed?

The President. Excuse me?

Q. Do you think Israel should release all the Palestinian prisoners now when the agreement is signed?

The President. I think that the United States will take the position we have always taken. The parties are working these matters out, and the parties will continue to do it, and we will support the peace process.

NOTE: The exchange began at 9:28 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Middle East Leaders

September 28, 1995

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, what message should the world get from seeing this group assembled here together today?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, this is truly an historic meeting. The people here represented have never sat together before.

And we have the Foreign Ministers of virtually the entire Arab League here. There's never been, even when we were here last—September 2 years ago, we didn't have this kind of representation.

And the message to the world is that the peoples of the Middle East are coming together. They're moving toward peace. They're determined to reach an honorable, a just, and a lasting peace.

Q. When do you expect President Asad to join you here, Mr. President? When do you expect President Asad of Syria to be here with you?

President Clinton. We don't want to give expectations. All I can tell you is that the message that should come out of this meeting is the peoples of the Middle East are moving toward peace.

Q. President Mubarak, what do you think of this accord? And do you think it is the biggest step in the right direction?

President Hosni Mubarak. I think it's a very good accord. And I can say that it's a very historic one. It's a very good indication about the peace which all of us hope can be maintained and cover all the Middle East.

Q. Are the toughest decisions yet to come?

President Clinton. There are always tough decisions on the road to peace. But look at what's happened. Look at what His Majesty King Hussein and—look at this agreement today. We're moving in the right direction. That's all anyone could ask. And the United States is very, very pleased about it.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

Q. Mr. President, to what limit can the United States guarantee the honest implementation for that agreement?

President Clinton. I don't know that the United States is in a position of guaranteeing it, but we have worked with these parties, and we have confidence that there will be an honest effort made to implement the agreement.

And I think the fact that President Mubarak would come here—he has been a very positive force in these negotiations—His Majesty King Hussein would come here for this should be evidence that all of us have

a high level of confidence that we will be able to work together to help this agreement be implemented.

And that will be my message to the others who are coming here from around the world today. Every nation says that it is a friend of peace in the Middle East. Now we must all help this peace to succeed in every way that we possibly can. And the leaders of your region by coming here today have, I think, given great energy and inspiration to that and will increase the chances that this historic meeting will lead to the proper implementation of the agreement and to rewarding the courage of the Israelis and the Palestinians who have made it.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House prior to discussions with King Hussein I of Jordan, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at the Signing Ceremony for the Israeli-Palestinian West Bank Accord

September 28, 1995

The President. Prime Minister Rabin; Chairman Arafat; Your Majesty King Hussein; President Mubarak; Foreign Minister Peres; Mr. Abu Mazin; Prime Ministers Gonzalez, Filali, Bin Shakir; Foreign Minister Kozyrev, our cosponsor of the Middle East peace negotiations; distinguished foreign ministers and members of the Diplomatic Corps; and honored guests:

I welcome you to the White House for this milestone on the path to reconciliation. Today we make a great stride toward the fulfillment of a vision toward the day when two peoples divided by generations, by conflict, are bound now by peace. Finally, the time is approaching when there will be safety in Israel's house, when the Palestinian people will write their own destiny, when the clash of arms will be banished from God's Holy Land.

Two years ago, on another brilliant September day here at the White House, two

men reached across one of history's widest chasms with a simple handshake. That moment is etched forever in our memory. With the eyes of the world upon you, Mr. Prime Minister, you declared your wish to live side by side with the Palestinian people in dignity, in empathy, as human beings, as free men. And you, Mr. Chairman, vowed to wage what you called the most difficult battle of our lives, the battle for peace.

In the days of labor that have followed, you have both shown profound courage in bringing us to this moment, and you have kept your word.

The enemies of peace have fought the tide of history with terror and violence. We grieve for their victims, and we renew our vow to redeem the sacrifice of those victims. We will defeat those who will resort to terror. And we revere the determination of these leaders who chose peace, who rejected the old habits of hatred and revenge. Because they broke so bravely with the past, the bridges have multiplied, bridges of communication, of commerce, of understanding. Today, the landscape changes and the chasm narrows.

The agreement that now will be signed means that Israel's mothers and fathers need no longer worry that their sons will face the dangers of patrolling Nablus or confronting the hostile streets of Ramallah. And it means that Palestinians will be able to decide for themselves what their schools teach, how their houses should be built, and who they choose to govern.

You, the children of Abraham, have made a peace worthy of your great forebear. Abraham, patriarch of both Arabs and Jews, sacrificed power for peace when he said to his nephew, Lot, "Let there be no strife between thee and me. If thou will take the left hand, then I will go to the right." Patience and persistence, courage and sacrifice: These are the virtues, then as now, that set peacemakers apart.

Mr. Prime Minister and Mr. Chairman, you are showing that it is not by weapons, but by will and by word, that dreams best become reality. Your achievement shines as an inspiration to others all around this world who seek to overcome their own conflicts and to secure for themselves the blessings of peace.